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Belize

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Acronyms

AMS	Accompanying Measures for Sugar
ATIPs	Anti-trafficking in Persons
BAM	Banana Accompanying Measures
BCCC	Belize Community Counselling Centre
BCP	Belize Central Prison
BFSD	Belize Framework for Sustainable Development
BNET	Belize Natural Energy Trust
BPD	Belize Police Department
BTEC	Belize Training and Employment Centre
CAP	Chapter
CAPS	Community Action for Public Safety Project
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIMS	Crimes Information Management System
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRD	Community Rehabilitation Department
CRPSF	Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework
CRS	Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSEC	Children against Sexual Exploitation of Children Act
CSF	Critical Success Factors
CVCC	Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition
DHS	Department of Human Services
DPP	Director of Public Prosecution
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
DVU	Domestic Violence Unit
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FVU	Family Violence Unit
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GoB	Government of Belize
GSDS	Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
IEC	Information, Education and Communication committee
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JICC	Joint Intelligence Coordination Centre
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation committee
MoEYSC	Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	National Aids Commission
NAFP	National Agriculture and Food Policy of Belize
NCA	National Council on Aging
NCCPSAP	National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
NCLC	National Child and Labour Committee
NCP	Non-Contributory Pension
NCRIP	National Climate Resilience Investment Plan
NDP	National Diversion Program
NGBVPA	National Gender- Based Violence Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHI	National Health Insurance
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NWC	National Women's Commission
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMB	Office of the Ombudsman
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
PANCAP	Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
POWA	Progressive Organization for Women in Action
PSB	Professional Standards Branch
QAI	Quality Assurance Initiative
SCAIS	Seif-esteem, Conflict resolution, Anger Management, Independent Living Skills
SID	Shared Incidence Database
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

SSB	Social Security Board
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TEI	Teacher Education Institutes
TIC	The Inspiration Centre
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TIPPA	Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act-2013
TWG	Technical Working Groups
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WIP	Women in Politics
YCT	Youth and Community Transformation
Youth RISE	Youth Resilience and Inclusive Social Empowerment

Introduction

1. Belize has made some notable advances in its discharge and protection of human rights since its last report to the Human Rights Council in 2013. However, because of financial and human resource constraints, full progress remains a work in progress.

2. While it is true that poverty and the widening income disparity are serious impediments to the full enjoyment of human rights by all citizens, the GoB's commitment to addressing these challenges is resolute. Policies and measures have been carefully developed on the basis of a human rights approach and respect of human rights is incorporated as a guiding principle in addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized. This human rights orientation is reflected in the pro poor social programmes of food security, education, health, and social services directed at the poor and indigent.

3. The GoB values immensely its participation with civil society and is grateful that one of the positive spin-offs of this relationship is that increasingly, more Belizeans are cognizant of their rights, and more importantly, are engaging in the national human rights discourse.

4. This Report conclusively supports the GoB's commitment to ensuring that the protection and promotion of the rights of all its citizens remain at the forefront of Belize's national development agenda.

Methodology

5. This National Report was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in accordance with the General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the Universal Periodic Review. The preparation of the Report was initiated in March of 2018 with a consultation of a key set of ministries and departments inclusive of: Human Development, Health, Education, National Security, Economic Development, Sustainable Development, Natural Resources, Labour, Immigration and Refugees, and the Attorney General. A second public consultation was held in August 2018 providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to input in the preparatory process. The Report was completed following consultations held over a period of five months.

Developments following the 2013 Universal Periodic Review

6. In its last Review the GoB received a total of 105 recommendations of which 65 were accepted by the GoB. The following information provides an update on the progress made with respect to the recommendations received and accepted by the GoB.

Acceptance of international norms – R: 99.5, 99.1, 99.11, 99.4 99.2, 99.6

7. Belize ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and acceded to International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (CRS) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).In April 2018, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) visited Belize and provided recommendations on the establishment of a National Preventative Mechanism to avert and deter the ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. This in compliance with the obligations undertaken in the OPCAT.

Cooperation with treaty bodies – R: 98.5

8. Regarding its backlog in reporting to treaty bodies, Belize submitted its national report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2017. Belize has prioritized reporting under the International Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), for submission in 2018/2019. In 2018 a Treaty Body Capacity Building Workshop was held, which focused on the process of preparing national reports under the ICERD and ICMW.

Constitutional and legislative framework – R: 98.1

9. Adjusting national legislation with a view to incorporating domestic and international treaties ratified by the country is an ongoing process with the Attorney General's Ministry.

National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) – R: 97.1, 97.2, 97.3, 97.6, 97.4, 97.5, 98.2

10. Belize enlisted the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the conduct of a feasibility study on the establishment a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. In the meantime, the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) continues to receive and investigate complaints by any persons or body of persons who claim to have sustained injustice, injury or abuse or other wrong doing by any authority.

11. GoB finances all operational costs of the OMB. Since Belize's last review, the budgetary allocation for the OMB has increased by 35.5% allowing for an increase in technical and support staff. The OMB continues to partner closely with authorities to strengthen capacity to investigate and resolve complaints and promote and protect human rights such as for example, through the use of formal agreements with key agencies, and the development of standard operating procedures to expedite the investigation and resolution of complaints.

12. To strengthen the Professional Standards Branch (PSB) of the Belize Police Department (BPD), the branches of the PSB are being established countrywide. The police officers assigned to these branches have the sole responsibility to receive, investigate and address complaints by any persons or body of persons who claim to have sustained injustice, injury or abuse or other wrong doing by any police officer. An effort is being made to keep the PSB branch offices physically separate from the police stations. The establishment of these branches will be complemented by a program of public education to further educate Belizeans on their rights and responsibilities.[1]

Human rights education – R: 98.3, 98.4

13. Human Rights Education is taught in an integrated manner in the National Primary and Secondary schools' curriculum.

14. Law enforcement agencies coordinate with the Human Rights Commission of Belize (HRCB) on a training program for newly recruited national security officers on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the Constitution. Periodic in-house human rights training is provided to all law enforcement officers.

15. By their professional training and formation, judges, lawyers and law enforcement personnel swear to uphold the Constitution and to protect and enforce the constitutional rights of all persons in Belize.

16. In December of 2017 more than 80 percent of all Magistrates and Supreme Court Justices attended a human rights training session that focused on Belize's anti-trafficking legislation as well as knowledge and management of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) cases.[2]

Equality and non-discrimination – R: 97.7, 98.8, 97. 9

17. The Constitution guarantees the protection of all citizens from any type of discrimination. Sections 3 and 6 of the Constitution stipulate the entitlement of every person in Belize to fundamental rights and freedoms without regard to race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex and that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.

18. There is no legislation specifically prohibiting discrimination against persons living with disabilities and HIV and AIDS. However, the National AIDS Commission (NAC) is collaborating with the Attorney General's Ministry in the drafting of an Anti-Discrimination Bill to address issues of discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS.

19. In 2017, Belize established two human rights observatories which seek to raise awareness on discriminatory laws and procedures for persons living with HIV, and to advocate for access to legal rights and fair trials utilizing a human rights-based approach for survivors of violence. Both observatories are staffed by attorneys who monitor cases related to key populations' access to justice, with specific focus on cases of violence, abuse and discrimination. The observatories provide legal services and file complaints to the OMB, where applicable, or seek appropriate legal recourse.

20. Data from the Human Rights Observatories are shared with the Shared Incidence Database (SID) overseen by the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition. The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) will use the database to track incidence of stigma and discrimination as part of the overall Strategic Framework for scaling up the response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.[3]

Right to development – R: 97.32, 98.24

21. In September 2014, the GoB adopted a National Climate Resilience Investment Plan (NCRIP) to improve the country's disaster risk management initiatives. The plan ensures that climate change-related impacts are integrated into national investment planning across all sectors and ministries. It facilitates the collection of geospatial data and risk assessments, essential for developing effective land use planning investments to strengthen the country's critical roads and bridges. Several projects have been implemented that upgraded Belize's drainage and transportation systems, inclusive of a national zoning plan that provides guidance on disaster mitigation. The NCRIP identified social, environmental, economic and cultural interventions to strengthen climate resilience.

22. This led to the implementation of the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP), 2015-2020, which provides policy guidance for the development of an appropriate administrative and legislative framework, in harmony with other sectoral policies, for the pursuance of a low-carbon development path for Belize.

23. The Belize Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2020 (GSDS) mainstreamed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals sets out eight (8) strategic actions to address the development of Belize.

Right to an effective remedy – R: 98.9

24. The Criminal Code CAP 101 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011, Section 32(a), (b) prohibits the excessive use of unwarrantable personal violence or ill-treatment to any person. The PSB receives citizens' complaints, facilitates the transparent investigation of police actions, and provides an avenue for redress of wrongful police action. Depending on the severity of the allegation and outcome of the investigation, officers can be charged criminally and/or disciplinary. Section 20 of the Constitution provides for judicial as well as civil redress.

25. Between the period 2013 and 2017, the PSB received 795 formal complaints made against police officers of which 234 were reported cases involving the excessive use of police force. (See Table 1: Complaints made to the PSB: 2013–2017).

26. There has been strengthened interagency cooperation with those agencies whose mandate addresses allegations of excessive use of force, such as the Professional Standards Branch. For example, the BPD and the OMB signed a MOU in 2016. The MOU facilitates interagency cooperation in the investigation of complaints, training, public education and awareness, joint field operations, and development and implementation of standard operating procedures between both entities to expedite the investigation and resolution of complaints.

27. Pursuant to the MOU, OMB and members of the PSB meet periodically to review complaints received. In addition, the HRCB conducted a training of trainers' sessions on the Commissioner of Police's Guidelines for the Treatment of Persons in Detention as a part of the measures to curb the complaints against the BPD.

28. Other practical measures taken to prevent the excessive use of force by the BPD include the installation of cameras in all police head stations (towns and cities), improved supervision of officers, along with the application of the full force of the law where complaints are substantiated.

29. Regarding the excessive use of force by prison officials neither the Annual Report of the OMB or internal prison records of the Belize Central Prison (BCP) reflects this as a challenge. The Kolbe Foundation manages the BCP with a zero tolerance for excessive use of force. The last major reported incidence of excessive use of force within the BCP was in 2015, in which three officers were terminated, and six others were placed on suspension.[4]

Prohibition of slavery, trafficking – R: 97.16, 97.17

30. The Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act-2013 (TIPPA) prohibits all forms of trafficking and increased the punishment of up to 12 years' imprisonment if the victim is a child, and up to 25 years' imprisonment in cases involving sexual assault or other aggravating circumstances. The law also elevated the offense of trafficking from that of a summary offence tried in the lower courts to an indictable offense tried before the Supreme Court and increased the penalties.

31. Section 5 of the TIPPA elevated the existing committee's status to that of a Council. The Anti-trafficking in Persons (ATIPs) Council has oversight of coordinates from a cross section of Government Ministries and seeks to increase prevention and protection efforts, increase the number of investigation and successful prosecution of traffickers, reduce the vulnerabilities and the demand that fosters all forms of trafficking through public education and awareness, and increase knowledge generation through data gathering and data management. The ATIPs Council produces and implements an annual action plan which focuses on conducting operations, increasing prosecutions, public awareness and sensitization, victim care, training, strengthening partnerships and statistics gathering.

32. In 2017, ATIP's Council and the BPD conducted a series of trainings to build the capacity of the police officers attached to the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and Criminal Investigative Branch on human trafficking, victim identification and referral to the investigative unit within the BPD. The Council also partnered with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international organizations to provide training to teachers, national utility workers, social security board inspectors, and private employers in the tourism sector on human trafficking, victim identification, and reporting. Extensive training was conducted with immigration officers, customs officers, labour officers, social workers, prosecutors and judges. Public education through the placements of billboards on major highways, public service announcements on the media and information sessions with communities are ongoing.

33. To increase the number of investigations, prosecution and convictions of TIPs crimes, the BPD created a TIPS Unit in 2018. This Unit is dedicated to the investigation of TIPs cases only. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) has the mandate to

prosecute the alleged traffickers. Given the serious nature of TIPs crime, many of the TIPs cases are prosecuted directly by the DPP.[5]

34. The Ministry of Human Development continues to provide shelter and other basic needs as well as physical and mental health services to victims of trafficking for the duration of the criminal proceedings, and, an individualized care plan with the goal of rehabilitation and/or re-integration. Given the country's small geographic and population size, the GoB provides a range of placement options depending on an individualized safety assessment. While the GoB operates its own shelter for trafficking victims and their families, it also recently signed an MOU with an NGO to also provide shelter services to victims. Both foreign and domestic victims have access to the same services. Foreign victims have the additional service of ensuring that their immigration status is regularized. Victims who have obtained temporary residency in Belize receive special consideration in applications for permanent residency.

Right to an adequate standard of living – R: 98.25, 97.24, 97.33, 98.16, 98.17

35. The GSDS places at the forefront sustainable development, reflecting an integrated approach which among other things incorporates both poverty reduction and long-term sustainable development goals. In line with the strategies and vision articulated by the Belize's National Development Framework, GoB continues to promote and undertake programmes aimed at addressing poverty and social exclusion. The Ministry of Human Development continues to administer key pro-poor initiatives including the Building Opportunities for our Social Transformation (BOOST), BOOST+ and the Food Pantry.

36. The BOOST+ Program continues to target indigent families who have no source of income and are in need of medium to long term income support. In 2016 a total of 3,437 households were on the BOOST Program. To further build on achievements of the BOOST program, in 2016 GoB implemented the BOOST+, a two-year family program which provides direct economic, social and psychosocial support for 400 selected BOOST households on the south side of Belize City.[6]

37. The BOOST+ Program has two program modules, (1) Family Program and (2) Job Readiness Course. The Family Program identifies strengths and needs, resources (persons, family, and community), links families to resources/programs, builds knowledge and life skills (team-building, parenting, communication, budgeting) and, helps to work towards dreams and goals. The Job Readiness Course seeks to help individuals to improve readiness for work through life skills and training courses, identify options where one can run one's own business and, develop individual work plans. A total of 953 persons benefitted from this program in 2017.

38. The Food Pantry Program, administered with funding from GoB, continues to provide basic food basket at a subsidized cost to poor families in Belize. The food basket comprises basic staples, vegetables and fruits which can be purchased at a significantly subsidized rate. At the end of 2017, there were 3,679 households benefiting from this program.

39. The Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) and the Accompanying Measures for sugar (AMS) were also both implemented with the aim of supporting social and economic development to contribute to the reduction of poverty. BAM focused on the workers and their families in southern Belize, namely of the Stann Creek and northern Toledo districts while the AMS project focused efforts on the population in northern Belizean.[7]

40. The Ministry of Health (MoH) provides health services to all based on the principles of universal health access and coverage, without discrimination of any type. The National Health Insurance (NHI) was expanded in 2014 to now include four (4) out of six (6) districts. It focuses on primary health care services and the population living in remote villages and the elderly are receiving more services tailored to their particular needs.

41. Procuring services to the NHI means an increase in services offered to the population through increased number of regular mobile clinics. There is no distinction in the provision of services, for example seasonal migrant workers in the banana belt area vis-

à-vis those living permanently in the community. The program has led to significant improvements in the quality of care and resulting health outcomes, resulting in the reduction of barriers to primary health care in the rural and poorer population, and a reduction in maternal mortality.

42. Given the importance of food security to human and economic development, Belize developed its National Agriculture and Food Policy of Belize (2015–2030) (NAFP). Among the five (5) Pillars identified in achieving the objectives of the NAFP is Pillar Three (3) which focuses primarily on ensuring food security for the country (e.g. increasing productivity and decreasing food imports by substituting with local products), and providing opportunities for rural people including women and youth to generate income from productive activities. In line with the objectives of the NAFP and through the assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Belize has improved access to healthy food by school children through the implementation of school feeding programs and gardening initiatives in several rural communities.[8]

Rights related to name, identity, and nationality and right to health general – R: 97.20, 97.26, 98.18

43. Belize remains close to achieving universal birth registration for children under age 5 with 95.7%. Factors impeding the full universal birth registration are: the lack of necessary documentation by parents to complete the registration process before leaving public hospitals, in instances of common law union the absence of fathers who are required to be present for process, and, the unavailability of registration services on weekends for those who are born and discharged during that time.

44. A vital registration officer is permanently placed at the largest hospital in each district. Families that meet all the requested criteria can finalize the process of registering their child before hospital discharge, pending only the delivery of the printed birth certificate. Periodic birth registration campaigns are implemented throughout the country.

45. The GoB through the National Aids Commission (NAC) continues to increase efforts and resources to tackle HIV/AIDS. The NAC coordinates, facilitates and monitors Belize's National Response to HIV/AIDS. The National Strategic Plan (NSP) is based on the principle of gender equity and equality and non-discrimination with a response that secures for all persons the right to freedom from discrimination because of age, race, sex, gender roles, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geographic location, disability and level of literacy. The NSP strives specifically to protect the right to good health and health services of vulnerable and most-at-risk girls, boys, women and men and the right to universal access to affordable and proper health care for persons infected with and affected by HIV.

46. There was an estimated total of 3,665 persons living with HIV in Belize in 2016. The national statistics indicate that the number of new HIV diagnoses has stabilized over the past three years – 2015–2017. Annex 1 Table II presents the number of new infections for the period 2014–2017.

47. Consistent with Belize's commitment to the UNAIDS 90 90 90 goals, the GoB has revised its HIV treatment guidelines to adopt the 'Treat All' Policy which states that once a person is diagnosed with having HIV, he/she will have immediate access to ARV treatment regardless of CD4 counts and viral load as this is their fundamental right. In December 2016 there were 1,353 individuals on Antiretroviral Treatment. GoB continues to make improvements in access to screening, diagnostic and follow up laboratory works, and the availability of adherence counsellors to improve adherence to treatment. The provision of antiretroviral medication remains free of cost for all.

48. With respect to intensifying efforts to provide information and education on sexually transmitted diseases, as well as to combat stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS, the NAC Secretariat has implemented several Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV awareness programs throughout the six districts. Activities include but are not limited to: social media and physical outreach, awareness campaigns, television ads in the different

spoken languages of the country, presentations at schools, appearance on talk shows, and health fairs to provide education on sexually transmitted diseases as well as in combating stigma and discrimination.

49. In September 2018 the NAC will be launching a new HIV testing sites app that will provide real-time mapping of key testing sites and healthcare service providers nationwide. This app will assist the user in locating the nearest HIV testing/healthcare facility and provide the services offered at that facility.

50. At the regional level, the NAC partners with Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC). The NAC in collaboration with CVC provided training to the stakeholders of both Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) community on Legal Literacy and Advocacy. This activity is part of a three (3) year regional project titled: Challenging Stigma and Discrimination to Improve Access to and Quality of HIV Services in the Caribbean.[9]

51. At the Parliamentary level, advocacy for sensitization of the public about the role that stigma and discrimination plays in the transmission of HIV continues to strengthen. In her capacity as Speaker of the House and Parliamentarian, the NAC Chair, Hon. Laura Tucker Longsworth was appointed by PANCAP as an HIV Champion for Change under the "Champion for Change: Ending AIDS by 2030" initiative. The Champion for Change Initiative brought together multi-stakeholders including parliamentarians, faith leaders, youth, private sector representatives, international partners and People Living with HIV (PLHIV) with a focused on eliminating stigma and discrimination. Through this initiative, Stigma and Discrimination Programs were held specifically with media personnel as well as health and law enforcement officials. This was done using the PANCAP Anti Stigma and Discrimination Toolkit. The programs were held in Belize, Cayo and Stann Creek District.[10]

52. To further complement the stigmatization efforts promulgated by the NAC, the MoH provides information and education on the prevention of STIs, recognizing the diseases, and, where to seek help. Diagnostic services and treatment is available for free to all persons affected. The information and education sessions are done whenever opportunities of community gatherings present themselves. Information and education in schools is done via the HFLE curricula and in presentations to schools.

53. To reduce stigma and discrimination, the MoH modified the stand-alone clinics for care and treatment to persons infected with HIV to integration of the services within existing health networks. Clinics and hospitals have trained medical and nursing personnel in managing patients with HIV. Some follow up testing have been decentralized with having the services available in the regions, closer to home such as for example, viral load measurement hence, conducing to a reduction of stigma and discrimination.[11]

Right to education – R: 98.19, 98.20, 97.27

54. In 2012, GoB approved the "Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) funded by the Inter-American Development Bank to support the National Education Strategy in the areas of governance and teacher quality. The program sought to: i) train approximately 80% of Teacher Education Institutes (TEI) pre-service instructors who teach method courses and 50% of in-service teachers at the primary level; ii) train approximately 50% of primary school principals in instructional leadership and administration; iii) develop and implement an Education Management Information System (EMIS) for the primary and secondary levels; and iv) improve the profile of teacher candidates.

55. Data for 2017 indicate an increase in the percentage of trained teachers at the pre, primary and secondary school levels of 14. 9%, 18.6% and 28.4% respectively since 2013. A full 75% of primary school teachers have undergone professional training. The EQUIP also includes ongoing onsite practical professional development of principals and teachers in 129 primary schools to improve delivery of English, Math and Science, the implementation of a Belize Teacher Professional Exam, *the strengthening of teacher education institutions*, and the implementation of the online Education Management Information System.

56. An inspectorate of schools headed by a Chief and Deputy Chief Inspector was established and an inspection framework was developed using the standard of the Quality Child Friendly Schools Philosophy and Program. Teams of inspectors were trained and contracted to conduct inspections. To date 50 schools have been fully inspected. Reports are shared with stakeholders and summaries are available on the Ministry's website.

57. Student enrolment statistics show a 5% increase in enrolment at the secondary level since the last review. Data indicated that the transition ratio to secondary schools at the end of 2017 was 85.6% - a slight increase from 83.5% in 2014. Enrolment of students from the lowest wealth quintile, have had a higher transition rate from primary to secondary schools than even the two quintiles above.

58. This positive development is attributable to the GoB's Pro Poor Policy and the High School Subsidy Grant. The latter seeks to level the playing field of secondary education financing by allocating public resources to secondary schools on a per student basis and includes a compensation component of additional funding for students identified as having academic or socioeconomic needs. All students from the Toledo and Stann Creek District, the districts with the highest incidence of poverty, automatically qualify for the subsidy. In 2018, the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture (MoEYSC) announced the expansion of the automatic subsidy grant program to students from Corozal and from rural hardship areas throughout the country in hopes of minimizing the disparity in enrolment and achievement between students from rural and urban areas.

59. Official statistics from the MoEYSC indicate that in 2010–2011 the dropout rate for secondary school was 8.1% in comparison to 6.8 for 2016–2017 and the repetition rate was 7% in comparison to 6.5% for 2016–2017. For primary school, for the period 2010–2011, dropout rate was 0.6% and repetition was 6.8% in comparison to 2016–2017 at 0.7% and 5.9% respectively. Though transition rates from primary to secondary continues see improvements, and repetition rates continues to decrease at both the primary and secondary level in the year 2016/2017, the gradual departure of boys from the education system remains a major challenge.

60. To decrease the number of school dropouts, an Early Identification Program was developed to sensitize school administrators and teachers to the warning signs of potentially at-risk primary school children. The program develops teachers' knowledge and skills for early detection of warning signs and assist administrators and teachers to put in place the support mechanisms needed to minimize or eliminate risk factors. In 2015, the Program was integrated into the education system at five (5) pilot schools. A key outcome of the pilot was the development of a literacy intervention program that is now being piloted nationally in selected schools.

61. Regarding the need for a policy to address pregnant adolescents, the Ministry is working with the Belize Association of Principals of Secondary Schools to draft a national policy to inform secondary school policies. It is anticipated that the National Policy will be completed before the end of 2019.

62 In the meantime, to avoid school drop out by pregnant adolescents several high schools within the country now provide young parents with the opportunity to return to school post delivery. Adult Continuing Education programs are also available country wide. These education programs offer quality adult education to students who need a second chance or who have never been to High School. The program issues a high school equivalent certificate. Statistics indicates an increase of 73% in the enrolment in Adult Continuing Education programs between 2013 and 2017. For the school year 2016/2017 66% of the enrolled students in these programs were females.

Advancement of women – R: 98.7, 97.8, 97.21, 98.10, 98.11, 98.13, 97.10, 97.12, 97.11, 98.12, 98.14, 97.13, 97.22, 97.23

63. To assist with advancing the implementation of the National Policy on Gender Equality adopted by GoB in March of 2013, the National Women's Commission (NWC) established the National Gender and Gender-based Violence Committee and the District

Gender-based Violence Committees. The Committees were established as an integrated, multifaceted, multi-sectoral response to address all forms of gender issues with respect to the five priority areas of Health, Education, Wealth and Employment, Power and Decision-making, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

64. In line with priority area addressing GBV, the National Gender- Based Violence Plan (NGBVPA) 2017-2020 was launched in 2017. The 2017–2020 action plan is preceded by and builds on the 2010-2013 NGBVPA and lays out a three-year framework in effectively decreasing gender-based violence and providing better support to victims. The NGBVPA provides a basis for advocacy work to end gender-based violence in all its forms and serves as a tool to assist policy and decision makers to contribute to the achievement of the national and international goals. The NWC is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the plan at national and regional levels.

65. The National Women's Commission is currently drafting National Implementation Plans for both the National Policy on Gender Equality and NGBVP 2017-2020 which will put in place actionable time lines for the implementation of concrete measures.

66. The Domestic Violence Act, CAP 178 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011 (DVA) ensures the prompt and equitable legal remedies for survivors of domestic violence. The Family Violence Unit (FVU) in Belize City and the DVU countrywide within the BPD collaborate with the Women's Department to implement activities against gender violence and to conduct sensitization sessions with community members. The FVU works to raise awareness on the issues of domestic violence with a focus on the role of the police officer in the reporting, investigation and prosecution of cases of domestic violence and the enforcement of the DVA. In 2014, through the UN Trust Fund Project, several training sessions were conducted with Junior and Senior Police Officers from a wide cross section of the BPD. The overall goal seeks to strengthen police response while increasing survivors/victim's safety and access to protection and justice.

67. In 2015, to further strengthen efforts aimed at combating all forms of violence against women and children, the Ministry of Human Development amalgamated the Women's Department and the Family Support Services Unit of the Department of Human Services to strengthen psychosocial support to women and survivors of Domestic Violence. A National Care Model for operating safe house was completed. The Ministry has also commenced a consultancy to develop in-house Policy and Procedural Manuals to guide the practices of the existing Safe Houses for victims of gender-based violence.

68. A National Surveillance System hosted by MoH serves as the data collection mechanism for capturing gender-based violence. The MoH compiles and produces statistical reports to share annually with stakeholders. In addition, the BPD implemented the Crimes Information Management System (CIMS) country wide and designated specific officers to compile and input statistics for Gender Based Violence under the Joint Intelligence Coordination Centre (JICC).

69. Belize, through the project BA1, carried out several activities aimed at the prevention and the reduction of violence against women, through interventions on the factors that contribute to violence reduction. The project among other activities facilitated the normative assessment of:

(a) Protocols for Multi-Sectoral Response for Sexual Violence (2011) which were developed to facilitate collaboration amongst the Ministries of Human Development, National Security, Health, and the Office of the Ombudsman to provide protection, treatment and support for survivors of sexual violence to reduce their trauma and facilitate recuperation;

(b) the Domestic Violence Protocol for Police Officers (2012) which was revised in 2011 to include a Complaints Mechanism linked to the OMB to investigate inadequate police response; and

(c) Family Violence Protocol – a guide for streamlining services to victims of domestic violence (2004).

70. The purpose of the assessment was to ensure that these documents are up to date and responsive to the needs of the victims and survivors of gender-based violence. The exercise helped to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement as well as highlighted existing standards and procedures that are adequately and effectively addressing gender-based violence in Belize.

71. Additionally, the project allocated funds for the procurement of software licenses for the GoB's case management tool (FAMCARE) for decentralization across Ministries, – Human Development, National Security (Community Policing) and several other agencies to improve the infrastructure and equipment of agencies that produce primary data, of observatories of violence against women, trafficking and femicide.

72. The BA1 project also includes an initiative to provide small grants to women who are at risk of and/or are victims of gender-based violence and trafficking to help them improve their economic status. Through this project 240women were provided with seed capital grant for entrepreneurship.

73. As it pertains to women in leadership, there is a slight increase in women leaders in senior government positions including CEOs and Directors. The 2018 CEO's listing indicates 32% of women serving as CEOs in the government service are women, a slight increase from the 25% registered in 2013.

74. Regarding the participation of women in political and public life more is required to increase women's participation at the executive and municipal level. Of the total aspirants for the March Municipal Elections 2018, 28% were women. At the General Elections held on four November 2015, the two principal political parties fielded three female candidates each. Two successful female candidates of the incumbent party were appointed as Ministers of State in ministries with substantive portfolios.

75. To raise women's representation at all levels of our political system, the Women in Politics (WIP) Project is being implemented to build confidence and improve the capacity of a critical mass of women in Belize to participate in and transform the political process at its highest level. Since the launch of the project a total of 98 women have received training in issues germane to politics and national development.

76. In 2017 the NWC hosted 200 women politicians, aspiring politicians, as well as women of leadership roles in organizations and communities for Belize's First Women in Politics Conference. The objective of the conference was to inspire, empower and educate to see higher representation of women in government and positions of leadership and for women to provide recommendations on improving the support given to them as politicians and aspirants. The recommendations from the conference will be used for future activities to build on the WIP Project.

Children: protection against exploitation – R: 97.14, 97.15

77. The laws of Belize established its minimum working age as 14 years. The Belize Labour Act allows for children between ages, 12 to 14 years to be involved in "light work" for a specified number of hours, as long as their development is not adversely affected.

78. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for the prevention of child labour in Belize. The GoB reactivated the National Child and Labour Committee (NCLC) which in turn has rolled out certain measures to address and prevent child labour.

79. The NCLC, the Labour Department, and along with the collaborative efforts of 13 Government Ministries work to implement the National Child Labour Policy, and review existing laws relating to child labour including its worse forms, to ensure that Belize adheres to international standards and commitments. The Committee is currently in the process of drafting the National Action Plan to reduce child labour through the launch of the Clear II project which is expected to be completed at year's end. The Clear II project also assists with capacity building to analyze current legislation and with the creation of an effective mechanism for the monitoring of child activities and enforcement of child labor laws.

80. The BOOST effectively discourages child labour through its conditional cash transfer program which ensures children's wellbeing by requiring regular school attendance as a condition for cash disbursement.

81. The Children against Sexual Exploitation of Children Act, CSEC (2013) makes it an offence for anyone to employ a child to engage in sexual intercourse or any other sexual activity with themselves or any other person. The ATIP's Council provides training to relevant officials, and stakeholders on the identification of victims of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and, provides information to the public regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Children: Juvenile Justice – R: 97.19

82. Belize has in place several programs and initiatives that integrates its legislation, policies and the practices of international conventions to ensure that at risk children, and the juveniles accused of or convicted of crimes are to be treated with dignity and are given the opportunity for recovery and reintegration and be afforded due process.

83. The Juvenile Offenders Act, Cap 119 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2003, establishes the juvenile justice system providing the basis for the treatment of children and youths who come in conflict with the law. The Act establishes the Juvenile Court and outlines the procedure for ruling in the Court. This Act is further supported by the Penal System Reform Act which in among other things, sets out alternative sentences for juvenile offenders. The Certified Institutions Act, and the Probation of Offenders Act establishes a system for the treatment of children with uncontrollable behavior through rehabilitative and institutional care.

84. The Juvenile Justice System comprises of several key institutions with responsibility for the protection of the rights of children and youths. The Community Rehabilitation Department (CRD) under the Ministry of Human Development is the central agency in the Juvenile Justice System. The CRD is tasked with the responsibility for the prevention, rehabilitation and diversion programs targeting children and youths in conflict with the law. The Department oversees the Belize Community Counselling Centre (BCCC) responsible for the provision of professional, culturally sensitive, age appropriate, caring and quality counselling services for at-risk youths. CRD also oversees the Youth Hostel which is the only certified institution providing rehabilitation and development services for high-risk children in conflict with the law.

85. GoB is currently working on amendments for the Juvenile Offenders Act, Penal Reform Alternative Sentences Act, Certified Institutions Act, and Probation of Offenders Act to improve the protection of the rights of children and adolescents who come in conflict with the law. These amendments make provisions for parents to be engaged in the process, as well as, for them to be held accountable; and allows for status offences to be decriminalized and dealt with as child protection issues.

86. Work is underway to pilot the comprehensive National Diversion Program (NDP) through partnership of the BPD, CRD and the Juvenile Court to enhance the well-being of any youth who comes in conflict with the law, and address some of the challenges currently facing the juvenile justice system.

87. To increase GoB's capacity to design, execute and monitor integral secondary and tertiary violence prevention policies, GoB implemented the Community Action for Public Safety Project (CAPS). CAPS brought the design and implementation of the Continuum of Care Model when working with children in institutions, which hinge on evidence-based practices and emphasize the need for proper assessments to identify risk for offending which in turn leads to the identification of targeted interventions with the view to rehabilitate. CAPS is a BZ$10mm initiative financed through a Loan Agreement between the GoB and the Inter-American Development Bank. The Project's overarching objective is to contribute to the reduction of youth involvement in major violent crime in Belize City.[12]

88. The Gateway Youth Centre operated by the MoEYSC was developed under the CAPS project. The centre provides a range of services to at-risk teens, those who are out of

school and unemployed. The Youth and Community Transformation (YCT) Project was launched with the objective of the reducing the vulnerability of children and youth to crime and gang membership in the Collet, Lake Independence, Pick stock and Port Loyola divisions of Belize City. The project seeks to reduce vulnerability to gang membership through the provision of services to enhance literacy and adaptive life skills, support conflict mediation and improve inter-linkages and the sharing of best practices among participating agencies working in those communities.[13]

89. In 2017, the YCT project was expanded to the west and south of the country. The Youth Resilience and Inclusive Social Empowerment (Youth RISE) Project was launched in April 2017 to expand access to social services for approximately 3,500 children, youth, and families in the communities of Dangriga and San Ignacio/Santa Elena. The objective of the project is reduced vulnerability of children, youth and families in the Dangriga and Santa Elena/San Ignacio Towns. It is a scale up to the YCT Project.

90. Youth RISE project supports the expansion of, and access to, existing social services as well as the development and implementation of new services to reduce social exclusion among youth and families in target communities. The project also provides services to enhance literacy and adaptive life skills, support community security and improve inter-linkages as well as the sharing of best practices among participating agencies (PAs) working in those communities.[14]

91. Since the implementation of the project, participants in the literacy program have shown improvement in literacy level by 1 or 2 levels and the Department of Youth Services Cayo Job Preparedness program yielded job placements for 25% of participants.[15]

Persons with disabilities: independence, inclusion – R: 97.28, 97.29, 97.30, 98.21

92. The Constitution of Belize includes the principle of the inherent equality of all persons. The Preamble states that the people require policies of state that eliminate economic and social privilege and disparity among the citizens of Belize whether by race, ethnicity, colour, creed, disability or sex and that ensure gender equality. GoB remains committed to fully integrating persons with disabilities into society and to provide for their care. This commitment has included a pledge to increase public awareness of their rights and needs and to ensure that persons with disabilities are treated as equal citizens.

93. Mrs. Kim Simplis-Barrow, wife of the Prime Minister, was appointed as a Special Envoy to promote the welfare of women and children. One of the significant achievements of the Special Envoy is that of raising the visibility and awareness of concerns related to children with special needs. This led to the establishment of The Inspiration Centre, (TIC) launched in 2014 to provide low-cost, comprehensive therapy and medical services to children with disabilities (birth to 16 years old). Regarding educational services, the MoEYSC maintains an educational unit which provides special education programs within the regular school system.

94. The Ministry of Human Development is the primary government institution charged with the mandate of promoting and protecting the rights of disabled persons. This Ministry, through the Women's Department, offers direct cash assistance for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities also benefits from the Food Pantry Program. With the support of Belize Natural Energy Trust and the Ministry of Human Development, the National Council on Aging (NCA) will be launching a national campaign to establish permanent and standardized priority service line at all essential services. The Belize Bureau of Standards is currently developing national standards for priority access to essential services for the elderly and for persons with disabilities.

95. Persons with disabilities have the right to enroll in the electoral census and vote except in cases where a person is certified as having psychosocial disabilities. Special arrangements are made to facilitate eligible persons suffering from old age or any physical incapacity to exercise their right to enroll in the electoral census and to vote. The Representation of the People's Act, of the Laws of Belize R.E. 2011, Sections 58(1) and

63(1) prohibits persons with psychosocial disabilities from being elected as a Member of the House of Representatives, appointment as Senator, or being registered to vote in an election.

Indigenous peoples – R: 98.22, 98.23

96. The Caribbean Court of Justice (the "CCJ"), the final Court of Belize, in determining ***CCJ Appeal No BZCV2014/002 The Maya Leaders Alliance, Toledo Alcalde Association and others v The Attorney General of Belize***[16] culminated in the drafting of the Consent Order dated the 22nd April, 2015. This Consent Order affirms:

> *"1. The judgment of the Court of Appeal of Belize is affirmed insofar as it holds that Maya customary land tenure exists in the Maya villages in the Toledo District and gives rise to collective and individual property rights within the meaning of sections 3(d) and 17 of the Belize Constitution.*
>
> *2. The Court accepts the undertaking of the Government to adopt affirmative measures to identify and protect the rights of the Appellants arising from Maya customary tenure, in conformity with the constitutional protection of property and non-discrimination in sections 3, 3(d), 16 and 17 of the Belize Constitution.*
>
> *3. In order to achieve the objective of paragraph 2, the Court accepts the undertaking of the Government to, in consultation with the Maya people or their representatives, develop the legislative, administrative and/or other measures necessary to create an effective mechanism to identify and protect the property and other rights arising from Maya customary land tenure, in accordance with Maya customary laws and land tenure practices.*
>
> *4. The Court accepts the undertaking of the Government that, until such time as the measures in paragraph 2 are achieved, it shall cease and abstain from any acts, whether by the agents of the government itself or third parties acting with its leave, acquiescence or tolerance, that might adversely affect the value, use or enjoyment of the lands that are used and occupied by the Maya villages, unless such acts are preceded by consultation with them in order to obtain their informed consent, and are in conformity with their hereby recognized property rights and the safeguards of the Belize Constitution. This undertaking includes, but is not limited to, abstaining from: a) issuing any leases or grants to lands or resources under the National Lands Act or any other Act; b) registering any interest in land; c) issuing or renewing any authorizations for resource exploitation, including concessions, permits or contracts authorizing logging, prospecting or exploration, mining or similar activity under the Forests Act, the Mines and Minerals Act, the Petroleum Act, or any other Act.*
>
> *5. The constitutional authority of the Government over all lands in Belize is not affected by this order.*
>
> *6. This Court remains seised of the remaining issue in this case, namely the Appellants' claim for damages.*
>
> *7. There shall be liberty to apply.*
>
> *8. The Appellants' costs of this appeal and in the courts below shall be agreed by 30th April 2015 or taxed.*
>
> *9. The Court retains jurisdiction to oversee compliance with this order and sets 30th April 2016 for reporting by the parties."*

97. As a consequence, and in compliance with the Consent Order of the CCJ, in January 2016 the Toledo Maya Land Rights Commission was established by GoB as the body with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the terms of the Consent Order, with specific interest in paragraph 3, through meaningful consultations with the Maya people, or their representative, to make recommendations on identifying and protecting the property and other rights arising from Maya customary land tenure, in accordance with Maya customary laws and tenure practices.

98. The Maya Land Rights Commission (the "Commission") in collaboration with all affected persons and/or organizations including the Maya Leaders Alliance and Toledo Alcalde Association has developed a work plan which seeks to:

(a) formulate a framework to identify where Maya customary land tenure exists;

(b) draft a Maya customary land tenure policy;

(c) develop a Maya consultation framework;

(d) develop and implement public awareness campaigns to reduce incursions into Maya; and

(e) establish a Bilateral Technical Committee to support the work of the commission as well as provide a space for dialogue with all affected parties.

99. It is noted that representation from another indigenous group, the Garifuna, has been invited to sit on the Bilateral Technical Committee (the "Committee") to ensure that the rights of this indigenous group are not infringed upon in the process of protecting the rights of the Maya. This is important as some Maya communities buffer, and in some cases, overlap Garifuna communities.

100. Moving forward with the implementation of the work plan is largely dependent on the availability of financial resources. Additionally, the differences in the opinion between the Mayas and the GoB have posed an additional challenge giving the perception that progress is slow regarding the implementation of deliverables. The GoB remains committed to resolving them.

101. Despite these challenges, the Commission has been able to, in consultation with the Mayas, establish the Committee, and it is expected to have its first meeting on the 8th day of October, 2018. Also, there is a draft customary land tenure policy, which is geared towards analyzing our existing laws and policies, with one of the ultimate aims being the demarcation of lands in the Toledo District.

102. Further, Paragraph 4 of the Consent Order speaks of the Government and third parties ceasing and abstaining from any acts "that might adversely affect the value, use or enjoyment of the lands that are used and occupied by the Maya villages, unless such acts are preceded by consultation with them to obtain their informed consent". As such, and until the Commission fulfils its mandate in the protection of Maya customary land tenure, the GoB in consultation with the Maya representatives, has developed a joint "Reporting and Dispute Resolution Framework" to address complaints which may arise in relation to this paragraph.

103. In addition to the Framework, and that until the mandate of the Commission has been achieved, the GoB has taken the necessary steps to monitor continuously the extractive activities of oil companies in Maya territory. Prior to granting an exploration license to companies interested in oil extraction in Maya territory, consultations are carried out in communities to obtain the informed consent of the villages.[17]

Migrants – R: 97.31

104. Belize is considered both a transit and destination country for migrants. GoB has initiated the process of developing a National Migration and Development Policy with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2017 a national steering committee was established with responsibility for drafting the framework. The Policy, inter alia, addresses the legislative provisions to prevent the criminalization of irregular migration. A national consultation on this aspect is planned for November 2018.

105. In 2015, Belize re-established the Refugee Eligibility Committee to assess requests from persons seeking asylum in Belize. This was followed by the establishment of the Refugees Department in 2016. The Department is staffed by a Director and two (2) Eligibility Officers and five (5) support staff members.

106. In February 2018, the GoB officially accepted 28 refugees, the first refugee recognitions in over two decades. The effective functioning of the process of request for asylum remains a work in progress.

107. GoB recognizes refugee protection as an important human rights issue and is taking concrete steps to accelerate progress in this regard. In its national chapter of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (CRPSF), Belize committed to a number of further initiatives, including *inter alia*, data collection on persons in need of international protection, improving effective access to information and asylum procedures for these persons, engaging in more capacity building for authorities and public information campaigns for the Belizean public, and, improving the refugee status determination process through consideration of joining the regional Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI).To deliver on priority commitments the GoB has established three inter-departmental MIRPS Technical Working Groups (TWG) whose operations are technically supported by UNHCR.[18]

Elderly persons – R: 98.15

108. GoB continues to support efforts to protect and promote the enjoyment of human rights of the older persons through National Council for the Aging (NCA). The 2018 Mid - Year Post Census Population put the estimates of older persons, 60 years and above, at 6% (24,454) of the population of Belize.

109. Belize's draft Older Persons Act is currently pending review with 2019 as the projected date for completion. The 2003 National Policy for older person is also being revised. In the absence of the Act, since 2016, the NCA has been partnering with the Attorney General's Ministry to carry out Wills and Legal Documents Workshops to improve older persons knowledge of their rights and the provisions that exist to protect them in the laws of Belize. The workshops have created opportunities for elderly persons to access free legal advice.

110. In 2015 NCA launched its Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The Strategic Plan outlines six (6) objectives to achieve over the next five to ten years in the development of the ageing population. Consistent with Objective One, in 2016 the Belize Private Pensions Act was passed. This legal instrument is designed to facilitate the registering and supervision of Private Pensions and the protection of private pensioners. The Belize Private Pensions Act is monitored by the Office of the Supervisor of Insurance and Private Pensions with the Ministry of Finance.

111. GoB continues to support elderly women (65 years and older) and men (67 years and older) with no source of income or inadequate means of support through the Non-Contributory Pension (NCP) administered by the Social Security Board (SSB). There were 2,513 beneficiaries countrywide in 2015, representing 12% of the older person's population. As of 2016 the number of beneficiaries for the NCP was 2, 274.[19]

112. Elderly persons not benefiting from the NCP Program can access other social assistance programmes such as the BOOST or the Food Pantry Program. Of the current BOOST beneficiaries, 17% are elderly persons.

113. GoB continues to make improvements in access to health care facilities for older persons. There are 5,935 older persons, or 24% of the elderly population benefiting from NHI countrywide. The Mercy Clinic and NHI paid Primary Care Provider, continue to provide services exclusively for persons 59 years and older. To further improve health services for the elderly, in 2016, Help Age partnered with the MoH to secure the services of a geriatric doctor and physiotherapist assigned specifically to Help Age. The geriatric doctor and physiotherapist provide care to members of all district branches of Help Age, residents in the residential facilities and in addition, provide training and support to Help Age staff.

114. To improve overall elderly care in society, in 2015 Belize Training and Employment Centre (BTEC) launched a Basic Home Health Caregiver Program, the first such course designed to meet the needs of older persons including those with dementia. The course is the starting point for the standardization of caregiver training in Belize. In 2017 the NCA

trained 82 caregivers across the country including those who were employed in care institutions and those working in older persons organizations.[20]

115. In 2014, the Belize Electricity Ltd, a utility company for which GoB is the largest shareholder, launched a Bill Pay program through which older persons who meet specific criteria are randomly selected to have their electricity bill paid for a year. In 2017 there were 1,100 older persons benefitting from this program.[21]

Conclusion

116. Over the last four years the GoB has continued its investment in the protection and promotion of human rights of all its citizens. The GoB remains undeterred in this commitment. The GoB continues to work closely with its bilateral development partners and the UN system for their invaluable support to advancing the human rights agenda of Belize.

Notes

[1] Officers have already been identified for the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts and for San Ignacio and Banque Viejo towns. Four (4) officers have been assigned to the Belize City Office as this is where the largest number of complaints are registered. Belmopan as the headquarters of the PSB is headed by a Senior Superintendent who is assisted by four (4) officers.

[2] Since the last review Judges and Magistrates participated in several human rights related training sessions including: Gender Equity Workshop of all Judges and Magistrates in 2013 Workshop on Juvenile Justice 2014, Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) Judicial Training in Judicial Ethics and Judgement Writing 2015, Judicial Colloquium on Mental Health in Capital Cases 2016, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR's) Refugee Law and practice Magistrates 2016, Workshop for Judges and Magistrates under auspices of Human Trafficking Institute 2017, and, the UNHCR Refugee training in 2018.

[3] This is an online database that will enable a standard system for capturing, collating and reporting human rights violations in the region. The SID provides an integrated platform to record, analyse and exchange information to impact policy and programmes and will further empower individuals and civil society organisations to pursue redress including legal remedies where these are available.

[4] According to the OMB's Annual Report 2016, of the 207 reports made during the reporting period 13% were made against the Prison Departments. complaints made were regarding prison conditions. There were no complaints on the use of excessive forces against prisoners.

[5] For the period 2013 to 2018, the BPD has followed a total of 19 Trafficking in Persons(TIP's) cases from which 9 cases are awaiting trial; there are 2 cases with convictions, 2 cases otherwise disposed and 6 cases still under investigation.

[6] The program aims to (1) develop the family's skills and knowledge, (2) build on strengths, and link persons to community resources, and (3) help the family achieve their dreams and goals.

[7] BAM through the electrification project, benefited over 500 households and 13 banana farms in 27 southern communities. Similarly, AMS among other activities, funded the training of 256 teachers in early childhood and secondary education, built two new markets in Corozal and Orange Walk Town to help farmers market their produce, and, financed the improvement of roads to help cane farmers cut production costs, by reducing their transportation costs from the fields to the factory.

[8] The policy aims to improve the competitiveness of agriculture products by raising the level of productivity of smallholders, supporting market driven production, promoting domestic and regional trade opportunities, increasing resilience of the sector to both natural and economic shocks, and building accountability through better governance of the sector.

[9] The Caribbean Vulnerable Communities is a regional coalition of community leaders and non-governmental agencies that are advocates and service providers, working with and on behalf of Caribbean populations who are especially vulnerable to HIV infection.

[10] The NAC also spearheaded a Private Sector Forum to discuss HIV/AIDS within the workplace and had over 10 private businesses sign on and commit to having an HIV/AIDS Policy in their work place. It also spearheaded specific training for the MoH staff in being men who have sex with men (MSM) friendly and sensitive to the population in general to avoid stigma and discrimination. The training is now being revised to expand its scope to include all staff of the facilities instead of only those having direct contact with infected populations. Training in HIV/AIDS including stigma and discrimination was held recently held with the Ministry of labour including country-wide labour officers.

[11] The NAC has also increased HIV testing in Key Affected Populations (prison, MSM, youth, males, Female Sex Worker, et cetera.) within varying high-risk populations with assistance from the MoH

and some CSOs partners.

[12] The specific objectives are to (i) reduce youth involvement in criminal activities and youth violent behavior in the schools which are beneficiary of the program resources; (ii) reduce recidivism among youth in the intervened juvenile rehabilitation institutions; and (iii) enhance the government's capacity to formulate and implement evidence-based policies on public safety.

[13] The programs under this project are implemented through partnership with government and non-government agencies namely: The Community Rehabilitation Department, Department of Youth Services, Department of Human Services, Community Policing Unit, Young Men's Christian Association, Samuel Haynes Institute of Excellence and Belize Friends School. To date, the project has invested 8.2 million BZD, impacted 2,744 beneficiaries.

[14] The programs are implemented through partnership with government and non-government agencies namely, Community Rehabilitation Department, Department of Youth Services, Department of Human Services, Community Policing Unit, Progressive Organization for Women in Action (POWA), Cornerstone Foundation, St Ignatius High School and Delille Academy. Since its launch in April 2017, the Youth RISE project has invested $883,000 BZD and impacted1, 292 beneficiaries, 571 in San Ignacio/Santa Elena and 721 in Dangriga. Some of the outputs include the completion of 1–2 cohorts of the transformation programs, namely Self-esteem, Conflict resolution, Anger Management, Independent living Skills (SCAIS), Sexual and Reproduction Health Training, Job Preparedness Training, Literacy Intervention, Employability Enhancement, GREAT Families and Community Support Summer Programs.

[15] Other projects include the Comprehensive Security and Violence Prevention that affects Children, Adolescents and Youth in SICA countries. The secondary and tertiary prevention components saw a drop-in centre for the Conscious Youth Development Programme (deals with conflict mediation between gang involved youth), after care social worker, youth correction officers for the Wagner's Youth Facility and financial support for programming at the Youth Hostel (barbering, drumming, arts, karate, dance and drama).

[16] [2015] CCJ 15 (AJ)

[17] Recently, US Capital Belize Corp, **a company duly registered under the laws of the Republic of Panama,** applied for an exploration license to carry out drilling activities in rural Toledo. Before initiating the review process for the consideration of an application exploration license, the GoB led by the Attorney General's Ministry held consultations in July 2018 with ten (10) Maya villages within and near the area of interest, to seek their informed consent for the issuance of the exploration license. Nine (9) of ten (10) of the villages granted their informed consent.

[18] The QAI is a collaborative initiative of Governments and UNHCR in the region to guarantee that their refugee status determination procedures are in accordance with the highest international protection standards.

[19] The six strategic objectives of the NCA strategic plan are:

- Strengthening the policy and legislative framework for older persons in Belize
- Strengthen initiatives and structures that promote wellbeing and healthy life styles
- Improve financial security of Older Persons
- Advocate for provision of adequate family and social support for Older Person
- Promotion of proper housing conditions, access to public spaces and a safe environment
- Monitoring and evaluation of the processes and impact of the National Operational Plans of the NCA.

[20] Community based organizations continue to provide social support for older persons to improve access to services and quality of life. Help Age branches across the country offer meals on wheels services to homebound older persons in addition to home support and social activities at their centres. Similarly, the LIFE organization in Belize City and HOPE in Punta Gorda offers meals and access to medical services for their members.

[21] At the end of 2018 the NCA through the support of BNET and the Ministry of Human Development will be launching its "Front-ah-di-line" Campaign to establish permanent and standardized priority service lines at all essential service for the elderly and persons with disability.